

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims**

1. (Currently amended) A method of maintaining a directory for a data container comprising:

determining that a sparse directory structure is to be changed, wherein the sparse directory has an entry for each addressable data stored in the container but not an entry for each addressable storage location in the container; and reconstructing said sparse directory structure into a fully populated directory structure having an entry for each addressable data storage location in the container.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

determining that said fully populated directory structure is to be changed; and reconstructing said fully populated directory structure into a sparsely populated directory structure.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said sparse directory structure comprises:

a plurality of first directory entries comprising an address to one of said addressable spaces, a descriptor, and at least one link, said link being a pointer to a different of said directory entries;

at least one bottom level list comprising at least one of said plurality of first

directory entries;

at least one top level entry for each of said bottom level lists; and

a top level list comprising said top level entries.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein said top level list is a skip list.

5. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein said top level list is a linked list.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein said top level list is an ordered array.

8. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein said bottom level lists are skip lists.

9. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein said bottom level lists are linked lists.

Claims 10-15 (Cancelled).

16. (Currently amended) A data storage system comprising:

a data storage container; and

a controller that defines a sparse directory structure for said data container having an

entry for each addressable data stored in the container but not an entry for

each addressable storage location in the container, determines that said sparse directory structure is to be changed, and reconstructs said sparse directory structure into a fully populated directory structure having an entry for each addressable data storage location in the container.

17. (Original) The data storage system of claim 16 wherein said sparse directory structure comprises:

a plurality of first directory entries comprising an address to one of said addressable spaces, a descriptor, and at least one link, said link being a pointer to a different of said directory entries;

at least one bottom level list comprising at least one of said plurality of first directory entries;

at least one top level entry for each of said bottom level lists; and

a top level list comprising said top level entries.

18. (Original) The data storage system of claim 17 wherein said bottom level list is a skip list.

19. (Original) The data storage system of claim 17 wherein said bottom level list is a linked list.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Original) The data storage system of claim 17 wherein said bottom level list is an ordered array.

22. (Original) The data storage system of claim 17 wherein said top level list is a skip list.

23. (Original) The data storage system of claim 17 wherein said top level list is a linked list.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Original) The data storage system of claim 17 wherein said top level list is an ordered array.

26. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the sparse directory structure of the determining step is formed by steps comprising:

creating a first directory entry comprising a first address, and a first forward link;

creating a second directory entry comprising a second address, and a second forward link;

determining that said second directory entry is located after said first directory entry in said data container;

defining said first forward link to link to said second directory entry;

creating a bottom level list that comprises said first directory entry and said second directory entry;  
creating a top level entry that comprises a link to said bottom level list, a lower range, and an upper range;  
analyzing said bottom level list to determine said lower range and said upper range of said top level entry; and  
creating a top level directory that comprises said top level entry.

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26 wherein said first directory entry comprises a first backward link and said second directory comprises a second backward link, the method further comprising:

determining that said first directory entry is located before said second directory entry in said data container; and  
defining said second backward link to link to said first directory entry.

28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26 further comprising:

creating a third directory entry comprising a third address, and a third forward link, said third address being between said first directory entry and said second directory entry; and  
adding said third directory entry by steps comprising:  
adding said third directory entry to said bottom level list;  
determining that said third directory entry is located between said first directory entry and said second directory entry; and

changing said first forward link to link to said third directory entry; and  
defining said third forward link to link to said second  
directory entry.

29. (Previously presented) A data storage system comprising a controller configured for selectively constructing either a variable size sparse directory structure for a data container or a fixed size fully populated directory structure for the same data container, wherein the sparse directory has an entry for each addressable data stored in the container but not an entry for each addressable data storage location in the container, and the fully populated directory structure has an entry for each addressable data storage location in the container.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Canceled)

32. (Previously presented) The data storage system of claim 29 wherein the controller is configured for selectively reconstructing a previously constructed sparse directory structure into a fully populated directory structure.

33. (Previously presented) The data storage system of claim 29 wherein the controller is configured for selectively reconstructing a previously constructed fully populated directory structure into a sparse directory structure.